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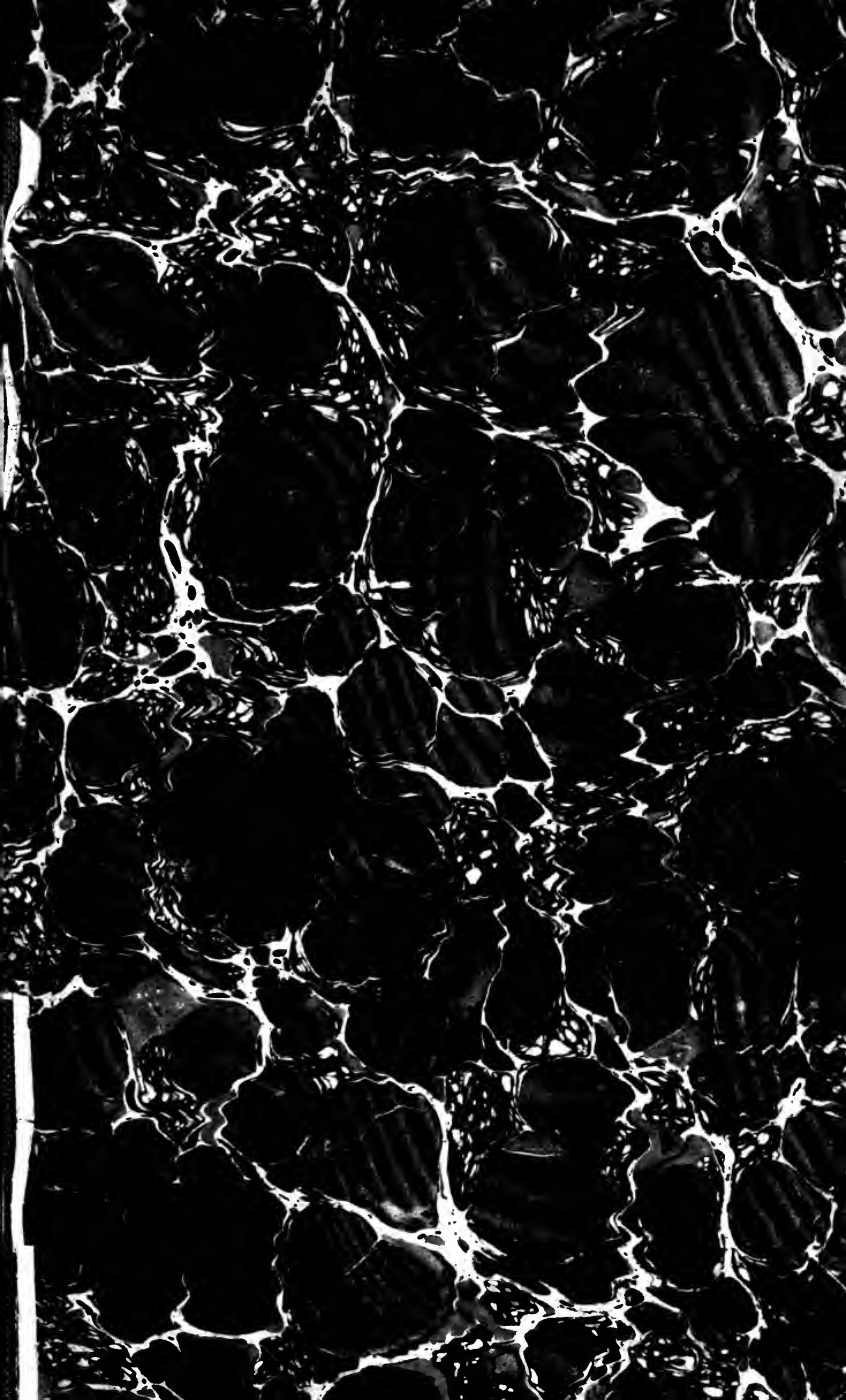
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Songs of Content.



SONGS OF CONTENT

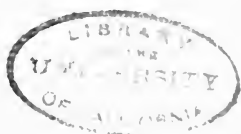
A Volume of Verse

BY THE LATE

RALPH ERWIN GIBBS

Published under the Auspices of the
English Club and the Literary Magazines of the University
of California, and Edited with
an Introduction by

CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY



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The Prize.

*A thriftless one there was who ever sought
To weave a vagrant fancy into song;
Baubles he framed in fretted verse; and long—
In love for these his small creations—wrought
Till each, as from its maker's heart, had caught
A mimic beat. But friends who saw cried, "Wrong
To waste thy Day thus! Not with rhythmic throng
Of dreams—with deeds are this World's Prizes bought."*

*Yet still this idle Singer in the Sun,—
Rhyming his chime of words, with moistened eyes,
Mood-caught in mesh of verses fancy-spun,—
Would answer nothing save, in wistful wise,
"We go strange ways to seek one Goal. The Prize
Is his who smiles content when Life is done."*

Introduction.

I undertook to prepare the poems of Ralph Erwin Gibbs for publication, primarily because the poetic nature and the noble character of the young man had so endeared him to his associates that it seemed fitting to erect out of his own work some monument that might keep his memory fair among us and comfort those by whom he was most beloved. But I had not worked deep into his manuscripts before the conviction came that not to have preserved the best of them for the public would have been no mere mistake, but an injustice. Of his lyrics the more beautiful, and of his poems of life and death the more seriously considered, deserve an honorable place in the estimation of Californians. If my interest in the author does not deceive me, they will win their way not only where promise untimely stricken is deplored, but where the comfort and the grace of art are for their own sakes welcomed. To our prosaic world there is but rarely vouchsafed the seer who with calm regard contemplates mystery, for whom deity wears a human air, and corruption assumes the incorruptibility of ideal form—the magician, at whose touch life and language kindle into song and the portals of the heart swing open. When the gods have begun to dower in poetic wise some gracious youth, and we to suspect him of the rapturous gift,—if then they love him beyond measure, and take him, it is but natural that we should cherish with uncritical affection whatever fragment of his art he may have left; that we should delight to conjecture what manner of poet he might have been, what blessing of comforter. All this have some of us, of diverse tastes, done in respect of these SONGS OF CONTENT. We have also tried the impartial view; and we think that others will share with us our generous error, if error it be, that some two or three hundred verses (and that is much) of this young man's making deserve, independently of personal considerations, to be called poetry and to live; that they are of the stuff that engages the sympathies of men for semblances not ephemeral, of the strain that enhances joy and lightens sorrow.

Introduction.

Several of the pieces here included were regarded by the author, in his modest way, as mere prentice work. They bear the marks of youth, and are preserved partly for the associations that attach to them, partly for occasional lines too good to be suppressed. But others, such as *A Moment's Halt*, *Quatrains of Qôbeleth*, *The Prize*, *The Lesser Rubaiyat* and *The Heretic*, possess intrinsic value. They have a message for the writer's fellow man,—simple, sincerely conceived and graciously delivered. To souls that stand between the pretentious urgency of the Age with its scramble after fatuous ideals and the cynical lethargy of the Individual for whom hope has long since been steeped in the wash of sense, this young man's gospel of rational acceptance, willing service, gratitude, comes with comfort, and, even though one admit not all his premises, with cheer. The keynote of all his singing is struck in the sonnet with which we have opened his book :

The Prize

Is his who smiles content when Life is done.

A simple creed, but impressive because so thoroughly considered, so deliberately and variously restated, and so optimistically sustained, no matter how unpromising the materials out of which it be constructed :

The Wilderness

Is blushing fair ; shall we not be content ?

Content to know our Journey is not long,—
That, soon though we drop out, or stray a-wrong,
The Caravan is creeping toward the Goal,—
And we have cheered the noon-halt with a song.

Though this poet, with the Preacher of his Quatrains (*Qôheleth*), accepts limitations that an idealist would reject :

We know — one thing we *know* ! — This Boon of Breath
We forfeit when the cold Hand summoneth,—

still he insists upon the ideal qualities of

The sweetness of this Cup of Life.

He worships no Cyprian delight or Cyrenaic satiety of sense, nor does he ignore the mingled properties of the draught

of existence,— “the interlaced scarlet and ebon of this tapestry,—” still he declines to underrate the provision that has been made for mankind here and now. Therefore, to the ascetic who reviles “The Goods of Earth as of the Beast,” he can reply :

That man shall surely please the Master more
Who joys outright in his right earthly store,
Who drains a brimming measure of Life's Sweet —
And dowers Me with what aboundeth o'er,

Who flings the Bird his crumbs ; and doth no worse
Than merry with the Show we still rehearse ; —
Who comforteth the Players in it, — then
Returneth calm into the Universe.

If this be Hedonism, it is a manly and enlightened Hedonism, not only altruistic, but rationally progressive. It has no more touch with the infidelity of Fitzgerald's Omar than it has with the beatific credulity of tradition. It rests in no smooth accustomed phrase, shutting its eyes lest it should doubt,—

By echoing *Credo*, shall I grasp the Truth ?

and yet it yearns with a practical hope, that meliorism founded on experience that outvalues a thousand certainties outworn :

Though we reach not the Vision,—only yearn,
A little way, and fall, yet we return
Never the self-same track ; so may not Man
From some far peak at length the Plan discern ?

That the poet is by no means moving under the religious influence of Fitzgerald is even more abundantly apparent in his reconstruction of the Tent-maker which is to be found in the *Lesser Rubaiyat* made from McCarthy's translation and based upon quatrains not used by Fitzgerald. The Omar of Gibbs's more genial *Rubaiyat* asserts a Soul, a Justice, moving, equalizing all.

This poetic expression of belief, much more mature than one would have expected from a man of twenty-seven, cannot, I think, but appeal with its large and lucid utterance

Introduction. to many, even those who may not agree. The frankness with which the *Riddle* is stated, the contentment with which it is left unsolved, the dignity of these goods of earth, the supremacy of the moment, the responsibility of each to share with others, and give thanks : these tenets were in themselves enough to enlist one's interest even though one might hope that the *Riddle* be not insoluble after all. But there is more beyond : the Singer "faces toward a larger light," a "fairer dream and nobler than of yore" ; and with a poetic instinct he finds the solace of his uncertainty not in science nor in logic, but in the Song that at once creates and comforts, weaving its "rhythmic throng of dreams" of that which may be — "to lift the sadness from the weary soul." It is in this way that, by some genuine if unconscious bidding of art, the young poet closes each of the three poems that deal with the problem of existence. They were still in manuscript, dropped from his hand that tranquil afternoon last spring, when he rushed from his study to save his dog from a falling tree and lost his life. *Cecidit velut prati Ultimi flos.*

When one considers the manner of his death, these lyrics of the joyous flood of life, of its beauty and its tragic chance, have a pathos all their own. For him no more "the sweet of the first-cut grass," nor "the noon-haze on the ridges," nor "meadow a-quiver with dew-brushed green where the quail trooped past," nor "thousand-voiced hush of the woods" ; as with his *Bold Blue Jay*, it was with him,—all in a single day :

Life is dear, yet all too near
The Shadow is lurking, the thing we fear,
Though it be the month of May.

How near to the heart of nature he had always been appears in every line of the delicate *Song for Summer*, the *Siesta*, and many another poem. Continually the *mot juste*, and that of which it bears witness : the practiced and attentive eye. The playful fancy and emotional fervor of his verses need no advertisement, nor the glad amusement, half-reproachful irony and lambent humor of the rondeaus and ballades in lighter vein. Occasionally in the lyrics one

thinks that he hears the Elizabethan viol and lute. The influence of Fitzgerald, Browning, Poe, Dobson, and even of Robert Brough and Eugene Field is here and there also revealed; but the reminiscence is rarely more than of some extrinsic quality of form. He has his distinctive note, his style. Some of his poems display not only large and imaginative outlook on life and shrewd observation, but felicity and finality of phrase unusual in the work of a young man. There is something of the inevitable in that memorable stanza of *A Moment's Halt*, beginning, "Far in the East, in that forgotten dawn," and in many another stanza of the *PROBLEMS*. In somewhat different guise this characteristic is visible, even in the entirely unfinished poem, *Daybreak in the Sierra Nevada*, which I have retained for the happy lines of its last division.

As in his verse, so was this young poet in himself: the gracious form, clear-cut and sensitive feature, the wise, wide-open, smiling eye. He was modest in his bearing, but dignified and forceful; a beautiful soul. He dreamed dreams, but yet dealt effectively with affairs. He read widely, but noticed shrewdly and with gentle amusement, or real sympathy, the world about him. He rejoiced in the crowd and the solitude alike. He was a good friend. To the art in which he deemed himself a mere apprentice, he was devoted only in less degree than to the mother who heartened him in his ideals. He was her only child, her companion and her stay. The tale of his life is short. Born in San Francisco, March 22, 1876, he passed through the public schools of Oakland, and was graduated in 1898 from the University of California. The next two years he gave to advanced studies in botany and zoology, and in 1900 took his master's degree in science. He had long been writing stories and verse for the University publications, the *Occident* and the *Magazine*; from 1900 on he gave himself to literary study and art. For two years he was engaged as assistant in the library and in the English Department of the University; and it was in the latter capacity that he was most intimately associated with the writer of this imperfect tribute

Introduction. to his worth. After June, 1902, he devoted his whole time to writing. In April of this year he was killed in the way already recounted.

For this publication his mother has placed all of Mr. Gibbs's papers at my disposal. I have also had the assistance of his classmate, Mr. James Hopper, of *McClure's Magazine*, in the collection of floating material. Some of the later poems in lighter vein appeared in the *Metropolitan*, *Smart Set*, and other periodicals of a public character. I think that I have overlooked none of any significance. If I have published some that he never would have printed, it is because I wished to preserve his personality to his friends; but no number of youthful poems could detract from the value of the best. Since he had no chance to revise and arrange, I have spent some loving care upon the task; but I knew his taste and no change has been made that he would not probably have approved.

Seldom in this world of insistent getting and spending does one estimate at its true value the Horatian philosophy of sweetness and content, seldom stay "to sing as the bee when Tibur-banks are aflower":

*Inde fit ut raro qui se vixisse beatum
Dicat, et exacto contentus tempore vita
Cedat uti conviva satur, reperire queamus.*

CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY.

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Songs of Seasons.

A Song for Summer.

*Songs of
Seasons.*

The meadow-lark ripples out over the stubble,
A bugle-call merry to herald the sun :
“Oh, it’s Maytime—it’s playtime ! A truce to all trouble !
Sing hey, nonny, nonny ! The Summer’s begun.”

Sing ho, nonny, nonny ! The scent of the haying—
The dew of the morning, the sweet of the year !
The heart of each creature’s too blithe for the saying
Of aught but “Heigh-ei-o ! The Summer is here.”

A-perch on the fence-post the squirrel sits sentry ;
The rabbit runs skipping ; the creek sparkles by ;
Small folk of the hill—the sly chaparral gentry,—
Sing, each in his way, “Oh, the Summer and I !”

Sing hey, for the dawning ! The meadow a-quiver
With dew, brushed green where the quail trooped
past,—
The haze on the mountain,—the glint on the river !
Sing heigh-o, the Summer ! It’s Summer at last.

The Sweet of the First-Cut Grass.

When mornings grow hot, and we'd fain dispense
 With coats, and our cares to the winds resign,—
When the day's work dawdles, and nerves are tense,
 And for far-off seas, or Sierras, we pine,—
When a clerk drudges sweatingly, line by line,
And sees a stray butterfly waver and pass,—
 There's a whiff of the Summer that stirs like wine
In the freshening scent of the first-cut grass.

When breezes blow faint with the redolence
 Of orchard and field,—and the clambering vine
O'erspanning the window each morning invents
 For its traceried green a richer design,—
When the marigold bed is a golden mine
To the bees; and laburnums—but let that pass—
 There's an essence of Summer more subtly fine
In the freshening scent of the first-cut grass.

Oh, afar in the mountains there's eloquence
 In the wind-flung spices of balsam and pine;
And we thrill by the shore with a keener sense
 In the free, fresh whiff of the tossing brine!
But when the new Summer will glow and shine,
And the sky wear the smile of a blue-eyed lass,—
 Then dreams of all sweetest desires combine
In the freshening scent of the first-cut grass.

TOWN:—Your cares to the wind we resign,
 For we've seen a stray butterfly waver and pass,—
And there's promise of Summer that stirs like wine
 In the freshening scent of the first-cut grass.

Siesta.

*Songs of
Seasons.*

Noon-haze on the ridges,—a droning bee,—
The chaparral's incense borne to me
On warm air, drifting drowsily,
 From brown hills, gray in distance;
And faint re-echoed from bush and tree,
 The locust's shrill insistence;
A hawk in the wide blue circling free,
And, soft as the stir of a far-heard sea,
A crooning of pine-boughs, dreamily:
 This is the sweet of existence.

Rain in the Night.

In the darkness, sudden, hushing,
Hark! the patter of the rain;—
Beating on the garret shingles,—
Gust-blown, tapping at the pane;
There's a witchery that mingles
In the music of the rain.

Yesterday is not; Tomorrow
Is afar, and haggard Sorrow
Flees the charmed sway
Of the fleeting, faëry patter,
Sooth and soft, a murmured chatter,—
Patter, patter,—little matter
What happed yesterday;
Care is banished with the vanished
Things of yesterday.

I'm a King in Farthest Thule;—
Mine are castles by the sea,—
Pennoned turrets risen newly
Where the road leads straight and truly
Into Utopy.

Truth is seeming;—Life is dreaming
To the lulling of the rain.
Dreaming,—dripping,—Time is slipping,
And my ship is on the main,
Coming far, and fast, and fleeter,
Through the rain.

Lo, the fancies, luring, fleeting,
Conjured hither by the beating,—
By the mystic midnight beating
Of the rain.

Mark the mellow, hollow cadence,—

Vague, reiterant refrain,—

The elusive, blending, fleeting,

Baffling, doubling, quick-repeating,

Dripping, drumming rhythm of the rain ;

Hark ! the rain—

The soft, incessant patter of the rain.

The Bold Blue Jay.

*“All in the month of May, my dear,
All in a single day—
Life is dear, yet all too near
The Shadow is lurking, the thing we fear,
Though it be the month of May.”*

So cooed the pale dove, as the flaming sun
Uprose in the merry May;
And she was sad when her song was done,
But the birds laughed—all but the littlest one—
And “Psha-a!” scoffed the big blue jay.

Oh, sweet is the air in the golden dawn!
“Skurree!” cried the prideful jay,
“Hurree! for I’ve my best coat on—
The bluest the sun e’er shone upon
In any month of May.”

He perked his head and he jerked his tail,
He flaunted his feathers gay;
And he jeered at the dove till she flew over-dale;
For who’d ever believe that aught could ail
Any one—in the month of May?

So the dove was gone from the old oak tree
When there came a boy that way;
A little air-gun boy was he—
He crept below, and, wantonly,
He shot the skipping jay!

A flutter of blue upon the ground —
Alas for the gallant jay !
A spatter of red on the leaves around,
And from over the hills there came the sound
Of a coo that seemed to say :

*“All in the month of May, my dear,
All in a single day—
Life is dear, yet the thing we fear—
The Shadow of Death—falls even here
In the merry month of May.”*

Daybreak in the Sierra Nevada.

Silver and sable sleeps the valley still,
Cold-gleaming where the moonlight dewy lies
On rock and meadow and on leaping river
That tosses, buffeting, the cloudy spray,
And down the rapid hurls a hundred streams
To swirl and blacken in the sweep.

Below,
Where, over sunken ledge, the river curves,
And spray-wet boulders cleave the cascade's rush,
A thundering turmoil shakes the air:—the vast
Reverberation rolls along the crags—
Titanic lullaby. The rhythm rocks
The cradle of the lily,—faint afar,
Lives to the dizzy pines that crest the cliffs,
And dies in its own overtones. The winds,
The glacier-born, through warped storm-stunted
boughs,
Harp their wild strain responsive. Now, and now !

But now—a hush; an unseen impulse felt!—
The mountains know another day draws near;
The wind is silent, and an orient mist
O'erveils the heaven before approaching Dawn.

The rosy pennons of her march are flung
Across the eastern sky; the flushèd bands
Creep wide, horizon-circling to the west,
Where dim and sinking yet a space the moon
Marshals her remnant legion of the stars.



See where the sun has touched the western height !
The trees stand mirrored, rippling in the stream ;
New blossoms hail the day ; the flashing trout
Upleaps and dimples all the wave with drops ;
Apace the steeps grow into light ; at last
The slant sun tops the hill, looks down and fires
The lilac's dew-sprent plumes ; the sudden day
In joyous flood bursts through the tree-gloomed slope,
And brims each lily's cup with light and life.

*Songs of
Seasons.*

The Bell-Buoy.

“ Ding-dong ! ”

Oh, the bell-buoy's swinging aloft and alow as
the sun sets red ;
Shrill, afar
To summer lands winging, the birds whistle wild,
through the gloom overhead.

“ Dong-ding ! ”

Send wide the warning ;
Ring, ring,
Lest grayly the morning
Weep over the land—the spar-strewn sand—
While rolling and shifting,
Grinding and lifting,
A surf-shocked hulk is a-pound on the reef !
Ring, ring,
Lest pale-faced grief
Dreadingly watch from the harbor-pier,—
Strain weary eyes through the dawning drear,
For the sail that is spread no more ;
While far on the foam-lined shore,

“ Dong-ding ! ”

The gulls are flying,
Wheeling, waiting,
Eddying, crying,
A wild requiem for the bold and strong,—
“ Ding-dong ! ”
A fit sea-dirge for sailors dying,—
A weird requiem, where, up and back,
Adrift with the foam and awash in the slack,

The face stares white from brown sea-wrack :
Stares at the sky, and the gray clouds flying.

Then Ring—Ring!

The bell-buoy's tossing and crying afar on the dark-
ening tide:

“ *Dong-ding!*

*Ho ye mariner! 'Ware of the rock! Steer wide,
steer wide!*

Ding-dong-ding!”

Problems.

The Heretic.

Problems.

“A Heretic!” the Synod cried.
White-faced, he bowed not,—nor denied
The charge. “Recant,” his friend implored.
But he—alone had dared face toward
A growing Light; and so—he died.

There came to me a dream:—a tide
Of rabble,—shouts,—a gaunt hill’s side,—
They swarmed up, goading One, and roared:
“A Heretic!”

Lo, on the top (Death is not wide),
Three wretches there they crucified;
And two were thieves. The Third—they gored
His side, to finish (“God our Lord,
In Thy Name!”—loud the Chosen cried,)
“The Heretic.”

This Moment's Halt.

Friend, is it sin to question why, forsooth,
Your God bade "eye for eye, and tooth for tooth,"

But yet again, "Turn thou the other cheek?"
By echoing *Credo* shall I grasp the Truth?

Nay, prate not of *my* Soul; — possess in peace
Thine own, if thou'rt so sure thou hast one; — cease

Thy babble of Hereafter, till the Truth
That lies fast-fettered Here thou canst release;

Till thou the meaning of the Here dost know, —
Till thou canst tell us whence that wind did blow
That brought us hither. Chart the road we came,
Ere thou proclaimest whither we shall go!

Into this World, with unavailing cry
Of protest, do we come; — then, life-long, sigh
For what we dream doth wait, horizon-hid,
Beyond the World's End; yet — we dread to die.

Why, wouldst persuade me then that we possess
Something my dog has nought of? We express
Our thought in terms more finely split, 'tis true, —
And we — we seek, and know not, Happiness:

That phantom Butterfly we all pursue,
And know not when we grasp it. — Oft have you
And I, unseeing, crushed in eager hands
Its wings; — yet, lo, it beckons on anew! —

This dog we call a brute, and would disclaim
 As kin,—is not his Life a spark that came
 Whence ours? Go, search thy inmost Being's core,
 And then with his compare;—nay, 'tis the same.

Far in the East, in that forgotten Dawn,
 The Sun's new light from out the slime let spawn
 Something that lived,—that ever took new shape,
 And wandered wide;—and still we wander on.

Onward we wander in an unmapped land;
 Slow toiling through a circle-bounded sand
 We seek the fond Mirage that, shimmering o'er
 The desert's rim, lures on with promise bland.

We yearn, we feel, we know it must be there;
 Inspired we see, and point where, quivering fair,
 Far in the sun the Golden City glistens,—
 And hasten on—to shifting sands and bare.

The luring Vision still glides on before;
 And Man plods after, chasing evermore
 That dreamed Ideal, changing still, yet still
 A fairer Dream and nobler than of yore.

*O Thou who knowest what we are, and why,—
 Thou Whose existence we debate, deny,
 Or still affirm with smooth accustomed phrase,
 And eyes shut lest we doubt,—still, still we cry:—*

*O Thou Who knowest why this Life began,
 We falter in the endless Caravan
 That circles through the Waste, misled, and yet—
 Has not our march been onward by a span?*

Though we reach not the Vision,—only yearn,
A little way, and fall, yet we return

Never the self-same track; so may not Man
From some far peak at length the Plan discern?

Of in the march of Ages has been one,
Some burning-heart Foreseer, who has run

Forth from the van, and from new peaks descried
At last the Truth! Near! Dazzling in the sun!

Loud to the host, slow-paced and duller-souled,
The Seer cries the Word,—“Lo ye! Behold

Our God.” They worship;—till new Prophets rise,
And frame a new God better than the old.

But see the fading moon. The night is spent;
The breath of day blows fresh in mingled scent

Of dawned-kissed hills and woods. The Wilderness
Is blushing fair; shall we not be content?

Content to know our Journey is not long,—
That, soon though we drop out, or stray a-wrong,

The Caravan is creeping toward the Goal,—
And we have cheered the noon-halt with a song.

Quatrains of Qôheleth.

Problems.

(Ecclesiastes ix.)

Spanning the Gulf, our Sage midworld suspends
His Logic-Bridge from moonbeams, and transcends
The Bounds of Being. While the Voice cries,—
“Fools!
One only thing ye know: that this Life ends.”

We know—one thing we *know*!—this Boon of Breath
We forfeit when the cold Hand summoneth.

Why, then, we're wiser than the Dead, at least!
They know not that;—nor wonder, What is Death!

They know not anything! Yea, all that hoard
Of Loves and Yearnings and old Hates, deep-scored
In Memory—They have forgotten all;—
Themselves forgot where late they loved and warred.

Then cease to wrangle in the bootless strife
Of Did or Did-Not. Ere the icy Knife
Of Death be at thy throat, make haste—make haste
To drain the sweetness of this Cup of Life!

Still while the throb of Life is in thy veins
Take merrily of what the World contains;
“Drink and be merry,” saith the Preacher, “For
These are the Goods He gives thee for thy pains.”

So when the Prompter of this motley Show
Whispereth, “Exit,” you shall say, “Although
I came unwitting,—I have played a part.
Merry I've lingered, and content I go.”

This Cup that mingles in its too-brief draught
Delight and Tears;—ah, drink! And when we've
quaffed

Our share of joy and woe,—let's then forget
The Sorrow, and recall whereat we laughed.

And still,—and still,—were't freely ours to choose,
Think you that we resolvedly would lose

One time-endear'd remembrance of old Griefs?
Would woo Nepenthe first?— Nor first refuse?

Think you we would forego—forget—one taste
Of Being's Bitter-Sweet? The interlaced

Scarlet and ebon of this Tapestry—
Ah, who would will one thread of it effaced,

Or who forget one strand of Self?— Ah, yes;
But when the Angel of Forgetfulness

Comes hand-in-hand with Death to blot Thee out,
Then greet thou both, and, smiling, acquiesce.

“Eat, drink, and make ye merry,” quoth the Seer;
Not so, the Dervish, with pre-prandial sneer

(He trusts that God hath much in store for him
Who, sour, despiseth His provision Here!):—

“Ye bibbing, babbling beasts, the Joys ye prize
Smell all of Earth. But whoso mortifies

This Flesh shall revel in the World to Come;
Joy never surfeiteth in Paradise!”

So he, a Death's Head sniveling at a Feast,
Reviling Goods of Earth as of the Beast —

Problems.

He yearns for sugared Bliss beyond the Stars,
And endless Joys a thousand-fold increased.

Ah, Love, a truce to thought ! We'll out-o'-doors
And woo the river, watch the hawk that soars

Beyond the pine-tipped mountain-top,—and you
Shall sing beneath the whispering sycamores.

. . . That man shall surely please the Master more
Who joys outright in his right-earthly store,

Who drains a brimming measure of Life's Sweet —
And dowers Me with what aboundeth o'er,

Who flings the Bird his crumbs ; and doth no worse
Than merry with the Show we still rehearse ;—

Who comforteth the Players in it,—then
Returneth calm into the Universe.

Lesser Rubaiyat.

(Versified and arranged from Quatrains of Omar
not included in Fitzgerald's Version.)

Throughout this March of Time from Dawn to Dawn
Two Days are from my Book of Cares withdrawn:—

The Day whose Sun has not arisen yet,—
The Day whose Sun the World hath rolled upon.

Then haste, O Love with tresses of the Night!
Pour us of Vintage that hath not seen Light

Since this Cup's Clay did live. O haste! before
The Potter doth our Clay remodel quite.

For this same Cup we fill with bubbling Mirth —
Was't not some Toper, trodden back to Earth?

So drink, Khayyam! ere men shall tread thee, and
Perchance in Wine-Cups give thy Clay rebirth.

Quoth I: Man's Essence is the Soul within;
Though to the Potter's Clay this Flesh be kin,
This Flesh is but an Earthen Flagon, while
The Soul—the Soul!—it is the Wine therein.

Man is a weird bepainted Lantern gleaming
Uncertainly through Wind and Dusk. The streaming
Light that glows through fancy-figured Shapes,—
That is the Soul within this painted Seeming.

“But how—nay, how——” quoth he to whom I
spoke,—

“When He who did enkindle shall revoke
Thy Candle's lease of Light? Remaineth then
Aught but a moment's Stench of tallow Smoke?”

Ah, well, since Time, the Wolf, doth after all
 Devour both Grief and Joy,—since that we call
 Delight must end, and grieve in ending,—why,
 What matter whether Good or Ill befall?

I tell thee, this small World,—its Slights and Scorns,
 Its little Cares and Quarrels, Nettles, Thorns,—
 Is worth a Barley-Corn. But then, the Next—
 The Other World? Oh, well,—*two* Barley-Corns.

My Friend, this World may, like a Walnut, roll
 Into the Unknown down a Rabbit-Hole
 For all I care. Had I created It
 There'd be two Suns, to shine at either Pole.

We're happy. (So the Cask be not run out.)
 We're happy. Thus if we maintain it stout
 We shall convince ourselves we are. *We are.*
 We're happy! Sirrah, drink,—and pass about.

*Lord, free me from these Passions that possess
 My foolish heart, still fettered by a Tress!
 Release me, Lord! Yea, take me from myself,
 And all this Riddle of the More and Less.*

*O when this tavern-turning Foot is still,—
 When, cold at last, this Hand that will—that WILL
 Clutch at the Cup is quiet,—let me sleep,
 And sleep, and nevermore know Good and Ill!*

*O could we find some place of utter Rest!
 And there forget all we have dreamed or guessed
 About the Riddle. Ages hence to spring
 Anew like Grasses from the Earth's green Breast.*

Problems. “Thou knowest thou hast fallen, and how far;
And Mahmud’s Laws—thou knowest what They are;
Thou *knewest*. Why, then, why wouldst howl
And cry on God to pardon thee, Omar?”

*O Thou Who knowest what I am because
Thou mad’st me thus, I’ve swept as they were Straws
Thy Spirit-bridling Precepts from my Path,—
And one by one I’ve broken all Thy Laws.*

*But still Thou knowest, Lord, the faith-fed Host
That psalm Thy Glory make especial Boast
That Thou art so All-Merciful.—Why, then,
Thou’lt Mercy grant to Me who need it most.*

*O Thou whose Aid men ask in all Affairs,—
Though good Resolves I sowed have all grown Tares,
At least Thou’lt credit me with this:—that I
Have ne’er beplagued nor wheedled Thee with Prayers!*

*For, Lord, I wot these Saints of Prayer and Fast
Please Thee no more than doth that Mosque-Outcast
Who shareth with the Stranger Flask and Loaf,
And drinks Good-Fellowship with Death at last.*

Their Creed, forsooth, they’d have me swallow blindly,—
Bepraise a God who shaped our Souls designedly
For Hell-Fire Fuel. Faith, all *my* Creed is:
Drink deep and pass the Bottle, and—be kindly.

Howe'er, I say, we wail of Wrong, this Ball,—
This man-infested Clod whereon we crawl,—

Problems.

Is scarce a Dust-Mote quivering 'twixt the Spheres,
And Justice *is* the Soul that moves it All.

And hearken, thou who yet hast never grieved
To find once more the trellised Vine new-leaved,
And tulip-dappled Spring once more reminding
How from thy World the filching Year hath thieved:

To mark once more how Time, the stealthy-paced,
Doth still the Gardens of thy Love lay waste,—
Thy dwindling Fellowship of Youth, grown old,
Summer by Summer from the Book erased,—

When thou and I are blotted from the List,
A little while no doubt we shall be missed;
They'll set up bricks upon thy grave and mine
To mark that Thou and I did once exist.

A Brick, betokening this World's concern
With Thee or Me! And then, to make, in turn
Another brick to mark another grave,
Thy Clay, perchance, or mine, they'll dig and burn.

Let whoso aim at Empire grasp the whole
Wide realm of Alexander, and enscroll
His Name in Lightnings. Better sing one Song
To lift the sadness from a weary Soul!

For be thou wise as Aristotle,—yea,
Or potent thou as Monarch of Cathay,
Or Roman Cæsar:—comes the End, and none
Shall know Thy Ashes from the common Clay.

Problems.

Then, why not sing? For even though this Ball,—
This man-bewildered Clod whereon we crawl,—
Seem scarce a Dust-Mote quivering 'twixt the
Spheres,
One Justice moves, and equalizes, All.

Iamne Sum Homo?

Problems.

(After Chuang-Tsu.)

There came to me a dream,—a whimsy dream : —
'Twas yonder where the almond blossoms seem
 So snowflake fragile ;—I, a Butterfly !
Poised on the pearliest top-most bloom, supreme.

I drank of nectar, floating here and there
On jet and crimsoned wings. What should I care
 Or think of morrow ? Was it not for me
That He created all this garden fair ?

And it was droll—amused me to recall—
A dream where I on two feet seemed to crawl,
 As 'twere a man,—a creeping, wingless Man !
My walkings bounded by the garden wall.

Today, this much I know—I am a man.
Yet—yesterday, I know, I *dreamed* I ran
 On earth-bound feet ;—I *was* the Butterfly.
Then God of dreams,—show us the Plan—the Plan !

For now how can I tell ? How can I tell ?
Tomorrow will the breeze of Dawn dispel
 Those Mists of Dream ?—And show mayhap
 that I,
Today a man, am dreaming this as well ?

Revolt.

(After something in Chinese literature.)

O why should I use tact, lest men discern
My feelings?—lest the nameless They should learn
I'm thus and so that's bad? *I know I'm I!*
If you misjudge me,—well, that's your concern.

Yet how we hedge and shift, with lips discreet,
To screen the Truth,—for fear, unmasked, we meet
The Mob's short-focussed gaze. Why, what's applause
Not merited?—that it should seem so sweet?

See how I mark and point the sad defects
In every Friend we know (as each dissects
His Neighbor's Folly),—and still hug the faith
That Some see Me unflawed in all aspects!

I saw ten Dervishes sleep side by side
In peace upon one carpet, while the tide
Of War o'erswept the land, and two Kings fought
Because they had an Empire to divide.

Aspirations.

Problems.

Am I a fool? For I can't tell;
Sometimes I think I feel the swell
Of shadowy thoughts, and yearnings vast
And vague,—lost memories of the Past,—
That seem to compass Heaven and Hell.

And then I think I've power to spell
In words the things we feel;—yet,—well,
It all resolves to this at last,—

“Am I a fool?”

I'd sail the weird old caravel
Of Fancy, till I heard the bell,—
Afar through purple mists,—at last,
That wakes the dim shores of the Past!—
I'd paint it all in words? Ah, well,
Am I a fool?



Aspects of Life.

Song of the Wanderer.

(Refrain from Lytton's *Kenelm Chillingly*.)

*Aspects of
Life.*

The World that I traverse is wide, is wide,—
And yet is too narrow to hold Content.
When Flush o' the Dawn and of Youth were blent
The Rainbow stood on the mountain-side;
I followed,— I followed,— it was my guide
Till the glow of it faded, and Youth was spent :
For the World that I traverse is wide, is wide,—
And yet is too narrow to hold Content.
Oh, it's farther, and farther, whate'er betide,
With steps still after the Vision bent !
For the Rainbow stands on the next ascent,
And it's yonder and yonder that we'll abide.
Oh, the World that I traverse is wide, is wide,—
And yet is too narrow to hold Content !

The Return of Kunotsuki.*

I came through the village, and none—not one—
Saw aught but a traveler, strange and old;
Still swift as of yore doth the river run,
But fast as the river the years have rolled;
Now are the hearts of men grown cold,
And YOUTH is a *word* graved on a tomb;
Yet, ah!—as I came by the riverside,—hold!
'T was the old sweet scent of Azalea bloom.

The rice-fields, shimmering green in the sun,
Are narrower now than they seemed of old;
Here used we to watch how the dragon-flies spun
About us in mazes of scarlet and gold;
But now those fiery blazonings bold
Are dimmed,—as the tinsel that used to illumine
Our shadowless world where all grief was consoled
In the sooth sweet scent of Azalea bloom.

Changed, all changed where my life was begun!
New paths they have trodden where once we
strolled;
And here,—in that garden where, one by one,
We saw the gay banners of Iris unfold,—
The vine-curtained arbor is sunk into mould,
And only there lingers the old perfume
From the Tale that shall never again be told,—
The sad sweet scent of Azalea bloom.

* On Kunotsuki-Kinotsrayuki, see Chinese-Japanese Repository,
Vol. II-III, p. 343.

FRIEND OF MY YOUTH:—Though our hearts be cold, *Aspects of*
And new paths trodden where once we strolled,— *Life.*
Lo, the Past drifts back in this weird perfume,—
The old sweet scent of Azalea bloom.

Blind.

Now I know the Stars are burning,
 Blazing through the depths of Night.
 All the Galaxy is bright ;
Far the Spheres are wheeling, turning,—
Here am I, blind Atom, yearning
 For a gleam—a gleam of Sight !
Now I know the Stars are burning,
 Blazing through the depths of Night.
Thou Unseen and All-Discerning :
Less for Glare of Day I'm yearning,—
 Oh, but let me see the Night—
 When the Worlds are all alight !—
When the Stars are countless, burning,
 Blazing through the depths of Night.

The Ballade of Dwindled Heroes.

*Aspects of
Life.*

Oh, where are our heroes who fought with Spain?

But lately, with pageant and jubilant shows,

We greeted them, garlanded back again,

Paraded them,—praised—as a nation owes.—

Their Victory's wreath is a withered rose,

The red of their triumph is smoldered to gray;—

The newsmonger counts it a scoop to expose

The flaws in our heroes of yesterday.

Their hours of glory and dazzlement wane.

Great God! That the warriors should fall to blows,

And scramble and sue for the rags that remain

Of the Glory that's lost—however it goes!

Will not *one* keep the heroic pose?

Will each convince us he's only clay?

Or is the fault ours who forget? God knows;

They used to be heroes, yesterday.

Now happy are they who went down with the Maine!

It's a perilous honor to rout one's foes!

And they who demolished the navy of Spain,—

Their fame is a phantom that shadier grows.

Who fell in the trenches win repose,

And a thanks whose lustre shall last for aye;

But they who came home to be crowned,—ah,
those,—

Those are our heroes of yesterday.

*Aspects of
Life.*

FRIENDS :— Is it we who forget? Who knows?
Or were all our demigods idols of clay?
And the crown—is a withered and thorny rose
Enough for a hero of yesterday?

The Marchioness of Yvetot.

(An Epithalamium for an American girl.)

*Aspects of
Life.*

Make way,—make way, ye! Stand aside!

Make way! They're coming out.

Fling wide the church doors;—fling them wide.

Hail to the Marquis and his Bride!

(Support him on the other side.

Is't palsy or the gout?)

Hail to the Bride! (Now hush we low.)

All Hail, the happy pair!

Hail, Marchioness of Yvetot!

Now mark her blushes come and go,—

All rosy red and white as snow,—

White as the Bridegroom's hair.

The Marchioness of Yvetot!

Hail, Marchioness of Yvetot!

(Her mouth, it is a Cupid's Bow.)

Hail, Marchioness of Yvetot!

Her cheek is fair as porcelain.

Her mouth—so sweetly curved!

He's lived the life of—Gentlemen;

And if he choose to wed again

Why not? 'Tis true he's old,—but then

Amazing well preserved.

A Marquis—what though he be old?—
A Marquis still is he.
And what though he be frosty polled!
Right Princely blood runs never cold.—
And see the Bride;—her hair is gold;—
And Gold, Gold, Gold hath she.

O Marchioness of Yvetot!
Now, Marchioness of Yvetot,
You've got your Heart's Desire, I trow,
Marchioness of Yvetot!

Be off, ye unwashed and unfed!
You hussy, will ye stare?
You! flaunting here your cheek of red,
Who, shameless, sell yourself for bread!
Your soul doth taint, as it were dead,
The Marchioness's air.

To sell oneself for bread to eat!
Faugh!—Rabble, stand aside!
His Lordship's carriage! Clear the street.
Now hand my Lady to her seat;
(Assist the Marquis,—mind his feet!)
Now cheers,—cheers for the Bride!

Ho Marchioness of Yvetot!
Hail, Marchioness of Yvetot!
(Now lout ye, fellows.—Lout ye low.)
Hail, Marchioness of Yvetot!

Yet saw ye in the Chancel there,
 Marchioness of Yvetot,
High in the window, pictured fair,
One that wept, and loosed her hair?
Mary o' Magdala?—but there,—
 All that was long ago!

O Marchioness of Yvetot!
Marchioness of Yvetot!
God help you now! How can He, though,
Marchioness of Yvetot?

“There is no Pocket in a Shroud.”

(The refrain by J. W. B., M. D., in the *Mentor*, a magazine published by the Massachusetts States Prison. February, 1901.)

Ye men of Gold !—Ye men of Gold !
Heed not the fool that prophesies.
A many, many things are told,
And in this World are many lies ;—
Yet hark ye to the Voice that cries—
In the desert,—in the crowd :—
He’s neither rich nor poor who dies.
“There is no pocket in a shroud.”

For be ye rich and little-souled,
Or be ye purple-robed and wise,—
Or simple be ye, and acold,—
Still when the last Accounting nighs,—
When Priests have closed the Prince’s eyes,
And when the peasant’s Field is plowed,—
Then each by each full friendly lies ;
“There is no pocket in a shroud.”

Yet some there are would clutch and hold
Their gainings,—some way yet devise
To build from what they’ve bought and sold,
A golden ladder to the skies ;
And some there are who still despise
Whom Want hath pinched, or Toil hath bowed ;—
To all—to all—the Voice replies :
“There is no pocket in a shroud.”

PRINCE:—They don the self-same guise *Aspects of*
Whom Gold hath blessed,—whom Want hath *Life.*
bowed;—
He's neither rich nor poor who dies;
“There is no pocket in a shroud.”

The Butterfly on Mt. Shasta.

Up where the mountain's frost-scarred granite cold
Reared crag and glacier toward the azure vast,
Wherethrough the sun blazed icily, and cast
Cliff shadows o'er the sleeping snows of old,—
Our breath came gaspingly,—and yet, behold,
Amidst that untrod whiteness, green-crevassed,—
A jeweled butterfly, imprisoned, glassed
With frosted crystal over wings of gold!

Poor gilded trifle! Did it, too, aspire
To soar above the World and Common Things—
Braving the height divine on tinsel wings?
To learn, too late, that oft one's cherished fire
Is but a dazzling Faith that mocks Desire,—
One's loftiest flight still only flutterings?

In Lighter Vein.



I But Sing as the Bee.

(Horace. Odes iv: 2.)

*In Lighter
Vein.*

*I but sing as the bee, when Tibur-banks are aflower,
Hoarding the tribute sweet of thyme-bloom and clover,—
So into song I distil Chloë's kiss, small sweets of the hour,
And wine sparkling over.*

ANTONY,—shall I strive to such loftier flight?—unable,
Seeking to rival Pindar? Nay, what a notion!
So,—a sun-struck Icarus,—tumbling, my glory might label
A spot in the ocean.

Pindar's psalm immense rolls deep with the sweep and the
roaring
Of torrents, singing of Gods,—of heroes immortal;
Pindar, Swan of Dirce, to cloud-wreathed Olympus up-
soaring,
Chants at Jove's portal.

*But idly I sing in the sun, when Tibur-banks are aflower,
Hoarding small sweets, like the bee amid thyme-blossom and
clover,—
So I distil into song Chloë's kiss, and delights of an hour,
With cups sparkling over.*

ANTONY,—thou to the Gods, who again have victory
granted,
Offerest scores, their blood on the altar-stones spouting;—
One beast I; but my voice shall swell (when the ode thou
hast chanted)
The tumult and shouting.

In Lighter Thou, O ANTONY, thou,—when under the palms and the
Vein. arches

Cæsar in triumph advances,—shall hail him, clear-voicing
Rome's acclaim; and as, silent, the column of captives
marches,

We'll join the rejoicing!

*But mine is the song of the bee, when Tibur-banks are
aflower,*

*Gleaning a tribute sweet from thyme-blossom and clover;
So into song I distil Chloe's kisses, the sweets of the hour,
And wine bubbling over.*

Romance.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

When I'm aweary of this Wheel of Days,—

O tell me tales of long and long ago!

There is no El Dorado now, we know;

Our World is all enmeshed in well-trod ways;—

Night's but a garish incandescent blaze;

Through all the Seas we commerce to and fro.

O when I'm weary of this Wheel of Days,

Tell me a tale of long and long ago:

A tale that echoes,—through the afterglow

Of glorious ages, and the purpling haze

Of Time,—old mysteries, and ancient frays,—

Old joys, and triumphs, pageantries, and woe.

When I'm aweary of this Wheel of Days,

O tell me tales of long and long ago!

Sir Dagonet's Song.

Cracked my brain, Oh Ho! but shout
The catch, nor let the bowl go dry;
Cracks but let the sadness out,
Let crone Care go by
Oh Ho!
A merry wight am I.

*Let crone Care go by, go by,
Let in the free sunlight;
If we can see the sky, glad sky,
Who cares to see aright?*

Knights each other's crowns may crack
To prove whose maid shines bright;
But who's already cracked, good lack!
Is wiser than Sir Knight;
Oh Ho!
He is a merry wight.

Then, clink, the bumpers round, around,
Fool Knight, Sir Fool, and maid;
We'll all sleep long and sound, full sound,
When 'neath the clover laid
Low, low,
In ivied tower's shade.

*Let crone Care go by, go by,
Let in the free sunlight;
If we can see the sky, the sky,
Who cares to see aright?*

A Ballade for Bill.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

Hither and thither and over the seas,—
Whithersoever or how we fare,—
With silver and linen and wine and ease,
Things don't taste as they tasted there :
The river, the pines, and the balsamed air !
Mountains between us and all town worry ;—
Hunger as keen as the cook was rare,—
And old Bill stewing the venison curry.

Idling and wandering whither we please,
Miles and miles from a woe or care,—
Riffles, and crags, and the whispering trees,—
The lake that we came on unaware !
Through the dusk forest,—o'er ridges bare,—
Hunting things feathery, finny, or furry,—
Weary the back trail to camp ;—but there
Was old Bill stewing the venison curry.

When night was astir with a shivering breeze
Then old Bill spun, by the camp-fire's flare,
The yarn of the Coon and the Hive o' Bees,
Or the fable of George and the One-Eyed Bear,
Serene as a King, be it storm or fair,
Smoking his cob, and ne'er in a hurry,—
Flopping straw hat on his grizzled hair,—
That's old Bill stewing the venison curry.

DEAR OLD BILL :—Though Fate decrees
We toil in the town, with its racket and worry,—
Some day we'll escape to the whispering trees,
And you, Bill, stewing the venison curry.

John Chinaman.

John, John, Chinaman, the taunting gamins cry,
But he shuffles by
And his sole reply
Is a vengeful gleam in his beady eye;
The reason why?
"Boy heap lie,
And Chinaman he go jail."
So he ambles away,
And his baskets sway
With his legs keeping time to the yoke-pole's play,
Jog-trotting up-hill and down dale.

John's weazened head is religiously shorn,
Save his cue
Which is bound in the knot that the ladies call Psyche,
'Neath a rusty slouch hat, that's battered and worn;
And his faded blouse is tattered and torn,
And patched in many a hue
Of denim that once was blue;
And manicure? "Nah," I fear he "no likee."
But "me likee" to sing
As the baskets swing,
And the clogs clap time to the pack-pole's spring,
A plaintive carol of old Peking,
That shrills in a painfully high key.

Now here's to *you*, John Chinaman !
And may you grow fat and rich !
You may be a heathen, but you're the man
That minds his own business and gets what he can,
Though the Christian give him the ditch.
Then here's to your health, John Chinaman,
Your wives and your wealth, John Chinaman,
Both blessings be yours, by and by !
And when you grow old,
With a sock full of gold,
May you sail to the land whose consecrate mould
Is the only good bed when you die !

Where the iris blows,
And the Yellow Stream flows,—
In a dozen silk coats and just repose
May you live ! And when, tippling,
You lounge where the rippling
Of water, through willow-tip bending full low,
Makes lullaby slow,
May you tell yellow tales to wee, gaudy-clad kids,
With eyes like the depths of your tea-cup,—
And doze
Till the tea-garden orchestra squeak up !

Then here's to your health, John,
And though it's by stealth, John,
You smuggled you into this land of the free,
Ere your pig-tail's gray,
May you blithely away
To wear a red button with your ancestree.

The Ballade of Thievery.

Humanity, why so prone
To swipe?—Ye Gods, reveal!—
To snaggle things not one's own?
To *adhere to*, you know,—not *steal*!
Now mark how a man may deal
Straight Goods in the Mart, and scatter
Much Pence to the Poor,—yet feel
An Umbrella's a—different matter.

For, oh! my Umbrella is flown
From my clutches. Say, is it an Eel?
Or has it took Wings of its own?
Not so! There were Fingers facile,
And a Smith—a felonious steal?
Steal? Nay; when rain-drops patter,
And gathering thunders peal,
An Umbrella's a—different matter?

Nay, Satan! I may not condone!
Speak, Smith! Couldst always conceal,
Wouldst pilfer me all that I own?—
Thou blushest like cochineal!
Thou sportest an Automobile,
And a Diamond (or soakest the latter!).
Wouldst rob me? Gadso! then to steal
My Umbrella's a different matter?

SMITH:—Art really so prone
To thief? I surmise that you flatter
Yourself that you're not;—that to *bone*
My Umbrella's a different matter!

Rondel to an Absent Ms.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

Far hast thou wandered from home before,
But ne'er—oh, never!—stayed so long;
Save only Thee, all, all my throng
Of errant Poems, evermore
Fly fondly homeward, o'er and o'er,
And punctual as 'twere Ping and Pong.
Thou, too, hast wandered far before,
Yet ne'er—oh, never!—stayed so long.
What Knave so vile would do Thee wrong?
Say, hath some sharkish Editor
E'en coveted the Stamps you bore?
Usurped the same from Thee, my Song?
Far hast thou wandered from home before,
But ne'er—oh, never!—stayed so long.

Triolet on the Same.

The postman comes, and the postman goes,—
O where is my wandering Poem tonight?
Yea, where are the Stamps I did duly enclose?
For the postman comes and the postman goes,
And somewhat he bringeth,—yet none that shows
'Tis addressed to myself in my own hand-write.
And the postman comes and the postman goes,—
But where is my wandering Poem tonight?

I Wasn't Afraid.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

I was just looking in through the fence next door,
And the big dog growled and barked so grim,—
Just the way in the circus the lions roar
Through the bars,—but I'd heard them before,
And I wasn't afraid of him.

He was fierce,—oh, my !
And as mad ! But I
Just wasn't afraid of him at all ;
So I looked in his eye,
And I walked right by,—
For I wasn't afraid at all.

I climbed all along where the alders lean
From the rocks by the river, and there in the shade
Is the hole where the big boys dive ;—but I've seen
Lots of water like that,—just deep and green,—
And I wasn't the least afraid.

Way down there, and dim,
You can see the fish swim ;
But I held on tight, -so I couldn't fall ;
Oo, the cold green river !
I did kind o' shiver,
But wasn't *afraid* at all.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

We were coming home late from Uncle Roy's,
Where the trees are awfully dark and tall;
And Katie was scared when we heard a noise,—
But I guess girls mostly are 'fraider than boys,
For I wasn't scared at all.

It was only the breeze
Made a noise in the trees,
And I wasn't afraid of the dark at all;
There was Something that hopped,—
Kept still when we stopped,—
But I wasn't afraid at all.

When everybody had gone to bed,
The owl came flying so quiet, and lit
By the window;—and “Who-oo-oo-ooo!” he said;
But I pulled up the quilt clear over my head,—
And I wasn't afraid a bit.

It makes you feel queer,
When it sounds so near,—
Though you're really not scared of an owl at all;
And his “Who-oo-oo-ooo”
Is so mournful, too,—
But I wasn't *afraid* at all.

Twilight Town.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

Oh, Twilight Town is the other side
Of the Hills of the Sunset Light !
Just on the shore of the Sleepy Tide,
Where the weird dream-ships at anchor ride,
Till they sail away at night.

They sail away over the Slumber Sea,
And the pilot? None can tell.
But who may the crew and the passengers be?
There's Tommy and Elsie, and several wee
Little scamps that we know well.

With the whitest of carpets the decks are spread
And guarded with golden rails ;
Old Santa Claus is the figurehead,—
And soft by a lullaby air they're sped
That billows the misty sails.

Vers de Société.

When Cupid dons the Cap and Bells,
And courts in Rhyme the Comic Muse,—
The Deity of Mirth he woos
In blithe Ballades, Rondeaux, Rondels ;—
Wherethrough sly Laughter bubbling wells,
And Banterings their venom lose ;—
When Cupid dons the Cap and Bells,
And courts, jocose, the Comic Muse.
Gay Badinage of Beaux and Belles,—
The merry Woe of him who tells
With tearful Grin the Plight he rues ;—
To laugh with these — ah, who'll refuse
When Cupid dons the Cap and Bells,
And courts in Rhyme the Comic Muse ?

Cupid, Chef.

*In Lighter
Vein.*

Now I'm Cupid's devotee.

He's the King of Cooks, I swear !
Runneth a Rotisserie,—
And his Understudy there
Is a Maid who grilleth rare
And serveth us with—all we get,
For it's all the Bill of Fare,—
Hearts, a-sizzling *en brochette*.

Cupid kills the meat; and he
Ne'er a pavid Heart doth spare;—
Pierceth by his Archery,—
Snareth with a golden Hair.
Then that Maid who Does n't Care
Helps him o'er the chafer set—
Arrow-skewered, pair and pair,—
Hearts, a-sizzling *en brochette*.

Artists they in Grillerie,—
She and Cupid ! I declare,
What's a Heart that's flying free?
Skewered Heart's the only fare !
No Rotisserie was e'er
Busy as Chef Cupid's; yet
One lone dish they serve you there,—
Hearts, a-sizzling *en brochette*.

Cooks:—I'm Cupid's devotee
(And eke his Understudy's)—yet
Naught's served at his Rotisserie
But Hearts, a-sizzling *en brochette*.

Dan Cupid, Tinkler.

I'd tell,—but, bless us! I forget
Whom first I was distract about;—
But several more ere Nan I met,—
'Twas she I'd not exist without;
Then sure my heart was broke! No doubt
'Twas something cracked,—but in the end
There came a little tinkler lout
With, “Hearts to mend, O,—hearts to mend!”

He patched my heart. But ah, the debt
I paid to Grace! She was devout;
And I grew so,—till that coquette
Corinne,—with smile and wile and pout,—
My suffering heart turned inside out,
That she and Kate might toss and send
The battered thing by turns about!
Then “Hearts to mend, O,—hearts to mend!”

'Twas Magdalene,—I see her yet!—
All flickering fancies put to rout;
Ah, how she danced that minuet!
Yet now I hear she's growing stout.
And then?—well, if I 'scape the gout,
I'll toddle after to the end
That vagrant tinkler with his shout,
“Old Hearts to mend, O,—hearts to mend!”

YE MEN AND MAIDS whose hearts have met
With accidents that rive and rend:—
Dan Cupid, Tinkler, don't forget,—
“Old Hearts to mend, O,—hearts to mend!”

The Ballade of the Wherewithal.

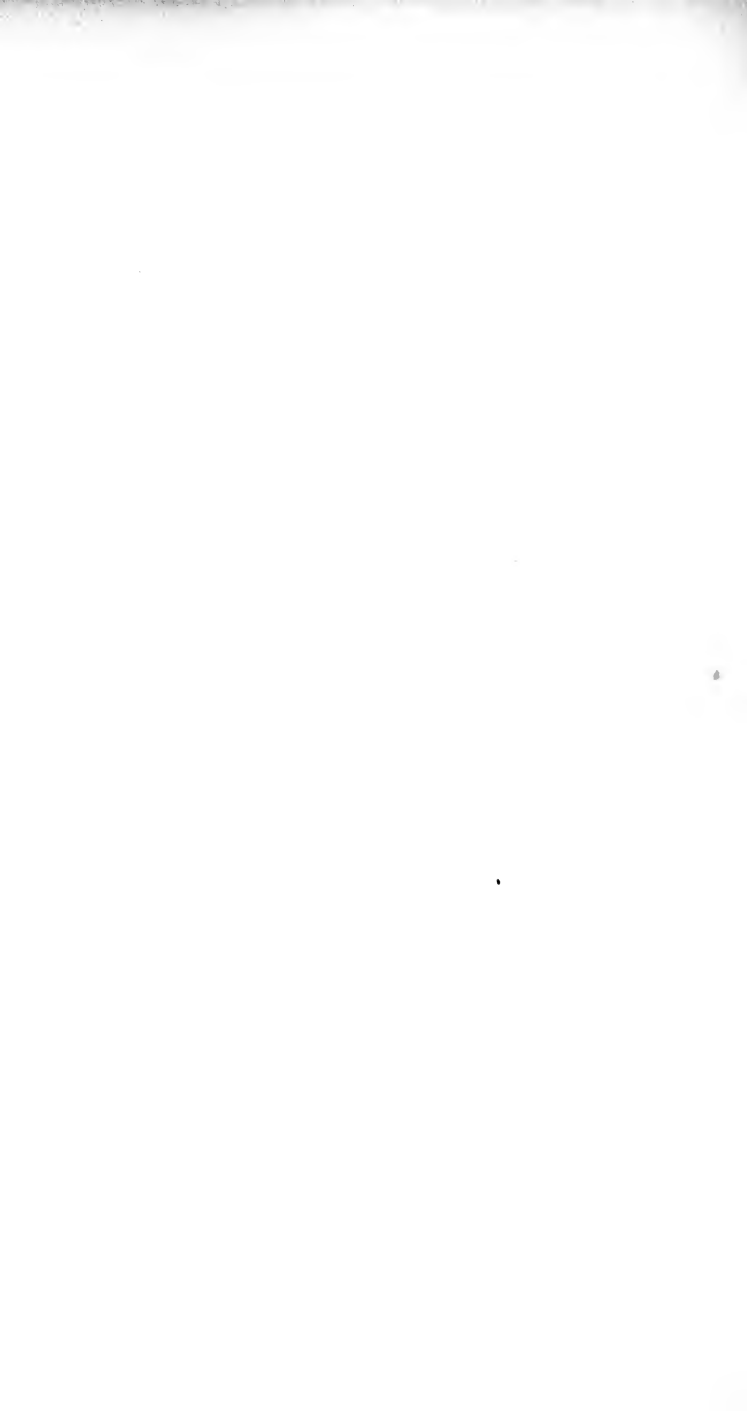
*In Lighter
Vein.*

Many a How hath barred
Our Progress here below ;
Many's the Scheme that's marred
By a Which, or perchance Why so ?
Such are the problems though
That bother me scarce at all ;
It's this I want to know : —
Where is the Wherewithal ?

Some of us most regard
The Whether and Which, as though
Nothing but these retard,
And render Attainment slow.
Which will I have ? (I trow
The embarrassment here is small.)
Both of 'em, sure ! But, no, —
Where is the Wherewithal ?

Many's the Ship ill-starred
Gold would have made to go ;
Many the heart-wrung Bard
Must sing for the Coin also.
I would build Cities, and, lo ! —
Palace, and Chapel, and Hall ; —
Demands Mephistopheles, "Whoa !"
Where is the Wherewithal ?

LOVER : — This World is marred
With Riddles ; but most of all
This is the one that's hard : —
Where is the Wherewithal ?



A Little Book of Doris.

A Fair Decision.

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

I've thought I'd decide
 On just when you look sweetest ;
Aye, Doris, I've tried,
But each time I decide,—
Having sought far and wide
 For adverbials meetest,—
Lo, there,— I decide
 That just *now* you are sweetest.

Vacation Study.

We're reading in Horace,
And Doris declines
(*Sub umbra arboris* —
It's all in the Horace)
Thus, — “*amor, amoris; —*”
But *amor* of mine's
Not that — it's in Horace —
Which Doris *declines*.

Between the Lines.

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

Though I read many books,
 They are all about Doris ;
You'd judge from their looks
That these fusty old books
Were abstruse ; — but Gadzooks !
 How pleasant their lore is ! —
I read many books,
 But they're all about Doris.

At Last.

Vacation is ended,
 Gay airs we are humming;
My woes are all mended,—
Vacation is ended,—
And everything's splendid,
 For Doris is coming;
Vacation is ended,
 Gay airs we are humming.

In Cupid's Mutoscope.

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

Her Aunt's house,—tea,—
And I'm invited!
Who'll be there? *She*.—
Her Aunt's house,—tea;—
You ask me — *me* —
Why I'm delighted?
HER Aunt's house,—tea,—
And I'm invited!

“From Four to Seven;”
Vive l'Amour!
A glimpse of heaven
“From Four to Seven;”
Would 'twere Eleven!
She'll be there, sure;
“From Four to Seven;”
Vive l'Amour!

Gad, what a crowd!
Where can she be?
All talking loud,—
Gad, what a crowd!
Who's that that bowed?
They stare at me;
Gad, what a crowd!
Where can she be?

A deuced jam !
 She wasn't there ;
Met old Madame
(A deuced jam !) ;
She thinks I am —
 Oh, I don't care !
A d—deuced jam !
 She wasn't there.

Sequel.

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

Well, Love *is* blind.

Declares she bowed ; —

She *was* there, mind ;

Well, Love *is* *blind*,

And can't even find

Her in a crowd ;

Yes, *Love* *is* blind, —

But she — she bowed.

Pleasant Weather.

Three ways at once it rained and blew —
And yet 't was pleasant weather ;
The path was muddy—room for two.
Three ways at once it rained and blew ;
Said Doris : “ I don't care ; do you ? ”
We laughed at storms together ;
Three ways at once it rained and blew —
Yet, faith, 't was pleasant weather !

Ballade of the Outing Hat.

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

Oho, for we care not,—we care not a rush
For the glooms that are vanished, and sober Lents !
Now glad-eyed Summer has come with a blush
And a breath of wild roses, and dim wood scents ;
It's now that the primrose and clovers commence
To border our path with a damasked mat ;—
But, faith, it's the gladdest of all portents
That Doris has donned her Summer Hat.

No wintry creation of plumes and plush,—
No Easter-tide vision, beflowered, *ingens*,—
As trim as a bird, it is simply—but hush,—
In milliner-lore She deposes I'm dense ;
Yet though a refractory Something prevents
Near knowledge of how it is trimmed, and all that,—
I'll reap the reward of abstinence,
Now Doris has donned her Summer Hat.

For now we shall wander where meadows are lush ;
We'll over the slopes where peace frequents,
Where the pines thrill soft to the river's rush,—
Dim murmurs that sing to a finer sense ;
Oh, the thousand-voiced hush of the woods, more tense
Where the woodpecker hides and repeats his *rat-tat* !
Hail Shades of old Izaak ! We'll joyfully hence,
Now Doris has donned her Summer Hat.

Town:—Farewell, for Doris consents,—
The clovers are spreading a damasked mat,
And it's there by the river we'll pitch our tents,
Now Doris has donned her Summer Hat.

Haroun's Daughter.

She thought not of it; or she thought, perchance,—

“Let me do good, and cast it on the waters.”

Lightly she cast a sweet and fleeting glance.

She thought not of it; or she thought, perchance,—

“I'll give him stuff to weave a whole romance.”

She smiled,—the youngest of old Haroun's daughters.

She thought not of it; or she thought, perchance,—

“Let me do good, and cast it on the waters.”

Would She?

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

If I should kiss you, little maid,—
Yes, kiss you, you, so sweetly staid,—
 Just up and kiss you, Eyes o' Blue,—
 By Jove! I wonder what you'd do?
Look scornful? Tearful? Sore dismayed?

In those soft eyes there'd be displayed
Blue summer lightnings, I'm afraid,—
 The blue of steel to stab me through,—
 If I should kiss you.

Those lips are sure not fit nor made
For words of wrath. Could they upbraid
 For daring what they tempt one to?
 Would cheeks flare up a rosier hue,
Or in white heat of anger fade,
 If I should kiss you?

The Kiss.

Then the stars went drunk and dancing,
And the moon was in eclipse;
Saw her eyes, half-tearful glancing,—
Then the stars went drunk and dancing;—
Staked my World upon the chancing,—
Kissed her—kissed her on the lips.
Then the stars went drunk and dancing,
And the moon was in eclipse.

Sub Rosa.

*A
Little Book
of Doris.*

What tho' the sun go high, go low !
Under the roses what care we ?
For none but we and the gold-finch know,—
There were none but I and the finch to see
The tints of rose
In her face when we —
Ah, well,—one may do without mistletoe,
Under the rose.

She and I and a bit of a bird,—
Under the clambering rose, we three ;
And much may be said in a single word,
One short syllable though it be,—
For the gold-finch knows
She whispered me
What only I and the gold-finch heard,
Under the rose.

Then what heed we that the sun is low ?
We have a secret no one heard ;
She and I and the gold-finch know
Much may be uttered in one small word,
Under the rose.

Song.

For what though the World be wide, be wide,
And many a land there be
That lureth the wandering soul to bide,—
If Love o' my Love yet be denied
To me,—to me!

And what though the World be wide, be wide,
And Glory and Gold there be,—
If the blood be cooled, and the heart o' me dried,—
If the madness o' Love be all denied
To me!







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